

NEWS RELEASE

Idaho Department of Water Resources



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Small School District gets Idaho's First Biomass Heating System

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For Media Information Contact:
Sue Seifert (208) 287-4904

Council School District has found a solution to its energy dilemma, and it's a triple hit! Next Monday, May 2 at 11 a.m., the school district will hold a groundbreaking ceremony to begin the construction of a new biomass heating system that will be fueled with wood chips. The system will heat buildings on the district's campus, including the elementary and senior high schools.

The school district, in a small town of about 1,000 people, has been experiencing huge power and utility bills for several years. The buildings that make up the school district's campus have been heated with a radiant electric heat in the elementary school and an old diesel-fueled boiler.

In addition, none of the buildings have fresh air ventilation or air conditioning for use during summer school in June and August.

The entire project will cost \$2.2 million. Two grants from the U.S. Forest Service's "Fuels For Schools" program for \$510,000 will help cover the cost of installing the new heating system. A \$2.2 million bond passed by the district's patrons will pay the remainder.

Council taxpayers will pay \$1.2 million on the bond and the remaining \$1 million will be paid by the school district through energy savings.

Through the Idaho Energy Division's Rebuild Idaho Program, an audit was completed on the buildings in 2003 by Siemens Building Technologies of Boise. The audit showed that by using a biomass heat system, updating the lighting and installing automated controls, the district could save \$1 million in energy the first 15 years.

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“This has been two years in the planning and we are finally breaking ground,” says Murry Dalglish, superintendent for Council School District. “This is the result of a lot of hard work, and we need to thank the Forest Service for the grant, Sieman’s Corporation, and the patrons of the school district who saw the need and addressed it. We also want to thank Sue Seifert with the Idaho Energy Division. Without all her hard work, none of this would have happened.”

In addition to the new heating system, the district received a \$94,800 grant from the U.S. Forest Service-Southwest Idaho Resource Advisory Committee to build two 900-square-foot greenhouses to conduct agricultural science demonstration projects. The biomass system will heat the greenhouses, a win-win situation for the Forest Service, the school district, its patrons, and Council’s high school students.

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